

Join The Journey

The Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan Newsletter February 2009



Governor O'Malley's Legislative Agenda for Impaired Driving



Governor Martin O'Malley announced support for legislation recommended by The Task Force to Combat Driving Under the Influence of Drugs and Alco-

hol. Five of the Commission's recommendations, which also support the goals of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP), require legislation, and the Governor added these to his legislative agenda.

Driving While Impaired - Suspension for Repeat Offender: Requires the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) to impose a mandatory one-year driver's license suspension for a person convicted more than once within a five-year period for a driving while under the influence, driving while impaired by alcohol, or driving while impaired by drugs violation.

Repeat Offenders - Increased Probation Before Judgment Look-Back Period: Prohibits a court from granting Probation Before Judgment (PBJ) to an impaired driving violator if that person has been convicted of, or granted PBJ, for any offense within the past 10 years rather than the current five years.

Alcohol Restriction on Driver's Licenses - Penalties for Violations: Subjects a person who violates a driver's license alcohol restriction to a fine not to exceed \$500 and imprisonment not to exceed two months, or both, regardless of whether the restriction was imposed by the courts or the MVA. Currently, imprisonment is only allowed for restrictions imposed by the courts.

Vehicle Laws - Testing of Drivers Involved in Fatal or Life-Threatening Crashes: Requires law enforcement to request drivers involved in a fatal or life-threatening crash to voluntarily submit to a preliminary alcohol breath test when there are no reasonable grounds to believe unlawful impairment, a preliminary breath testing device is available, and the driver has not been transported to a medical facility.

Alcohol Involving Underage Persons - Prohibitions and Sanctions: Strengthens Maryland's zero tolerance of underage drinking by making it a violation for under-21 youth to not only possess, but consume and exhibit the effects of consuming alcohol; and making it a criminal offense for any adult to purchase, attempt to purchase, or otherwise obtain alcohol for someone under age 21.

Businesses Support Safety

Several prominent business are taking an active role in traffic safety by establishing and enforcing strict safe driving policies.

KCI Technologies, an engineering firm in Baltimore County, has adopted a ban on cell phone use when driving a company vehicle; a driving record check for all new hires and a yearly check for existing employees; employee payment for half of the insurance deductible in at-fault crashes; and completion of a defensive driving course.



KCI is a member of the Maryland Highway Safety Foundation, a non-profit advocacy organization formed in 2008 that is hoping behaviors learned on-the-job will translate into safer driving when employees and their family members use their own vehicles.

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State SHSP Update

Maryland Selected As SHSP Model

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Office of Safety is developing a tool to help states successfully implement their SHSPs. The tool is a process model based on states that are already successfully implementing their SHSPs such as Maryland.

Members of the SHSP Management Team and others met with officials from FHWA to detail Maryland's successful approaches to implementation including the following:

- Active involvement of partners, particularly the Motor Vehicle Administration which has taken a leadership role in the SHSP;
- Development of communication materials like the newsletter to keep safety stakeholders interested and informed;
- A direct link between the SHSP and the behavioral activities and programs in the Highway Safety Plan; and
- The Leadership Summit which was designed to actively involve representatives from local governments and Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

For more information about the process model, contact Tamiko Burnell at the FHWA Office of Safety, tamiko.burnell@dot.gov.

MVA Creates Driver Safety Division



The vision for the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration is to establish the agency as "Safety Oriented, Service Driven, and Security Focused." To create that culture of safety

and to refocus the MVA's role in promoting driver safety, MVA Administrator John Kuo established a Driver Safety Division in June 2008.

The Division will gather information on best practices, strategies, countermeasures, and approaches that could impact driver safety in Maryland. This information will be shared with the MVA Executive Team and the Driver Program Divisions to develop policies and practices and for use in safety messages to the public.

The Division will also review the strategies and action steps from the SHSP that are assigned to MVA (older drivers, young drivers, motorcycle safety, distracted driving, and truck & bus safety) as well as examine driver education and test requirements and motorcycle test requirements. For additional information, please contact Danielle Betkey, Program Manager, Driver Safety Division at 410-768-7061 or dbetkey@mdot.state.md.us.

County Health Officers Hear SHSP Message

Neil Pedersen, Administrator of the State Highway Administration (SHA) and the Governor's Representative for Highway Safety, provided information to the Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) on the need for the health care community to get involved in the SHSP. He noted traffic safety is a public safety issue and county health officers can play a key role in implementing many of the SHSP strategies and action steps.

One area where the health officers can have an immediate affect is support for the intervention and treatment initiatives developed by the Task Force to Combat Driving Under the Influence of Drugs and Alcohol. Ruth Maiorana, Executive Director of MACHO, pledged to work with SHA and the SHSP stakeholders to further the cause of safety in Maryland.

Regional SHSP Update

Baltimore Region

Howard County Expands Teen Driver Safety Program

The Howard County Health Department recently joined the county's police department and school system to expand a teen driver safety program by adding a "Parent-Teen Driving Agreement," which studies show can reduce teen driving deaths.

The Howard County teen safety program, which began in 2004, includes an educational program "You Are Responsible," to teach students about unsafe driving. To obtain a parking permit students must attend the seminar with a parent or guardian.



The new contract was funded by a grant from the Maryland chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Local pediatricians will complement the program by talking with teens and parents about the benefits of the contract.

The contract will also strengthen current teen driving initiatives conducted by the police department including invitations for parents, students, and school officials to attend DUI checkpoints; displays in high schools as part of the "Arrive Alive" program; and traffic safety posters displayed by school resource officers in all county high schools.

To learn more about the program, contact Tim Branning, Howard County Community Traffic Safety Coordinator at tbranning@howardcountymd.gov.

Regional SHSP Update **Cont.**

Tragedy Leads to New Joint Initiative

The Charles County Sheriff's Office and the Charles County Association of Student Governments have formed a special task force of students and law enforcement officers to develop ideas on ways to reduce teen driving crashes.

Some of the ideas included mock crash scenes at schools, urging the legislature to make talking on a cell phone or texting while driving a primary offense, and the *Alive at 25* Program, which is already being conducted at a number of schools in Southern Maryland. For more information, contact CTSP Coordinator Rebecca Martin, martinb@ccso.us.

St. Mary's Schools Target Young Driver Safety

In Southern Maryland, safety practitioners identified young driver safety as a primary concern in the county. To address the problem in St. Mary's County, Dr. Michael J. Martirano, Superintendent of Public Schools, joined forces with community partners to launch the Superintendent's Young Driver Initiative which includes the following five point plan:

- Require students requesting a permit for school parking to view a school-based audio/visual presentation addressing high-risk driving behaviors and to sign a safe driving contract with their parents and school administrators;
- Encourage students to register their vehicle with the St. Mary's county Sheriff's Office STOPPED (Sheriff's Telling Our Parents & Promoting Educated Drivers) program;
- Attend a one-hour student assembly on young drivers involved in traffic fatalities; and

- Reinforce the importance of the program through a public media campaign.

The purpose of the plan is to help young drivers make safe decisions on the road by educating them about laws, high risk driving behaviors, and the importance of developing good driving habits. For more information, contact F. Michael Wyant, St. Mary's County Public Schools' Supervisor of Safety and Security at 301-475-4256, ext. 188.



DriveCam Update

Southern Maryland is pilot testing DriveCam, the in-car system parents can use to monitor the driving behavior of their novice driver. As of the end of September, 108 families had enrolled in the program, which is being evaluated to determine whether it is effective in reducing the number of at-fault teen driver crashes and citations. A number of the parents have already had an opportunity to view the exceptional events DriveCam captures such as hard braking or swerving.



For more information, contact Calvert County CTSP Coordinator Debbie Jennings at jennindk@co.cal.md.us, Charles County CTSP Coordinator Rebecca Martin at martinb@ccso.us, or St. Mary's County CTSP Coordinator Jackie Beckman at jackie.beckman@co.saint-marys.md.us.

Washington, DC Region

Focus On Pedestrian Safety

Pedestrian safety is a major concern in Prince George's county. The stretch of Pennsylvania Avenue in the county, for instance, has seen a number of deaths prompting the State Highway Administration and local law enforcement agencies to take action.

The District Heights Police Department has been awarded pedestrian safety enforcement funds and a draft report from SHA District 3, which covers Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, cites potential infrastructure treatments to improve safety.



In Washington, DC, the Council for Court Excellence, a non-profit organization that works to improve the administration of justice in the local and federal courts and related agencies in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, has formed a Committee on Pedestrian Safety due to the substantial increase in pedestrian injuries and fatalities in the region.

The Committee has concluded speed is a major issue; fines are too low in the District for pedestrian violations; the public must be educated; and success requires a lead agency. For more information on the Council, visit <http://www.courtexcellence.org/aboutus/ourmission.htm>.

Regional SHSP Update **Cont.**

Western Maryland

Western Maryland Holds Summit

In response to the 2007 Traffic Safety Leadership Summit, safety stakeholders from throughout Western Maryland participated in a Summit in 2008 to help local governments develop an integrated team approach to SHSP implementation.

Hosted by and held at the Allegany County Health Department, participants included representatives from Sheriff's Offices, health departments, education officials, engineers, city and town police departments, the State Highway Administration, District 6, and the Maryland State Police.



The work portion of the summit consisted of two break-out sessions. The morning session involved a cross section of the various governments and departments from all three counties in Western Maryland and during the afternoon session, participants met with their respective counties (Garrett, Allegany, Washington).

The focus in the morning was to identify the SHSP emphasis areas and strategies that were most important to Western Maryland and during second session, the groups prioritized the emphasis areas and strategies based on the needs of each county. At the Summit, participants also developed a framework for future implementation and a Memorandum of Understanding for each county.

For more information on the Western Maryland Summit, contact John Wolford of SHA District 6 at jwolford@sha.state.md.us or any of the three CTSPs (Diane Lee, Garrett County, leed@dhhm.state.md.us, Janie Hutcherson, Allegany County, jhutcherson_prevention@yahoo.com, Jacqueline Willison, Washington County, jwillison@dhhm.state.md.us).

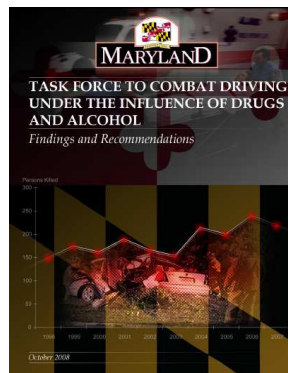
Emphasis Area Update

Impaired Driving

All counties in Maryland are now participating in the Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign and to encourage more activity, the team is promoting low manpower checkpoints which are effective.

A comprehensive media campaign is also in the works and the team is developing a training program for judges. A court monitoring program with volunteers from MADD has now been implemented in three counties – Prince George's, Anne Arundel, and Howard.

The Task Force to Combat Driving Under the Influence of Drugs and Alcohol report was submitted to the Governor, the President of the State Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Delegates. The report involves an extensive review of the impaired driving problem in Maryland and a series of recommendations to the legislature on ways to improve the situation.



For more information, contact Liza Aguila Lemaster at laguilalemaster@sha.state.md.us.

Information and Decision Support Systems

The team is tracking the objectives and goals for the Traffic Records Coordinating Committee (TRCC). A decision will be made in the near future about whether the emphasis area will be the TRCC.

At a local data workshop that involved community traffic safety coordinators and state and local traffic engineers, the need for timely and accurate data was a key recommendation. A MAARS (Maryland Automated Accident Record System) data mining and visualization tool to map high crash locations is being developed and tested for the Baltimore area.

Keeping Vehicles on the Roadway



The team is working on a process to help the seven SHA Districts develop a standard process for tracking data. The team is also examining the rumble strip program to determine effectiveness. There is considerable before data and next year, SHA will look at the after data to determine whether there has been a positive impact on the number of run-off-the road crashes.

Emphasis Area Team Update **Cont.**

Intersections

The team developed a program to analyze the results of intersection improvements at high crash locations, and before and after studies are now required for all intersection improvements. A study was conducted in Harford County that found all but one of the seven sites had an improvement with a benefit/cost ratio that meant for every dollar spent, there was a \$168.3 benefit. The team is also developing an intersection safety checklist that can be used for new or modified intersections. For more information, contact ekuhn@sha.state.md.us.

Pedestrian Safety



The team is currently reviewing various pedestrian hazardous locations.

Montgomery County has identified high risk areas and the County Executive has made available \$4 million from the speed camera program to improve safety at these locations. A road safety audit will determine the appropriate solutions.

Efforts are underway to conduct a spring Street Smart campaign and law enforcement training with the hope of expanding the program to the Baltimore area and the Eastern Shore in the summer months. Street Smart is the pedestrian safety campaign conducted by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. For more information, contact Jewel Johnson jewel.johnson@baltimorecity.gov.

Occupant Protection

Maryland increased the seat belt use rate by two percent increase to 93.3%. In 2009 the goal is to increase the rate to 94 percent. Data indicates the ma-

jor problems are on rural roads and with older drivers. To address low use rates among ethnic groups, the Click It or Ticket campaign will conduct an initiative in Baltimore County tailored for African American audiences and a Hispanic radio station will be promoting seat belt use among their listeners.

A new child passenger safety law raises the age for booster seat use to age 8, 65 pounds, or 4 feet 9 inches. For more information, contact Tim Richards at trichards@sha.state.md.us.

Distracted Driving

The team has developed a definition of distracted driving to assist



law enforcement and the judiciary in identifying and prosecuting violators. The definition states, "Distracted driving diverts attention to an event, task, item, etc. that is not related to driving and takes the focus off the task at hand." The team is considering an e-training program on how law enforcement agencies record distracted driving on the crash reports.

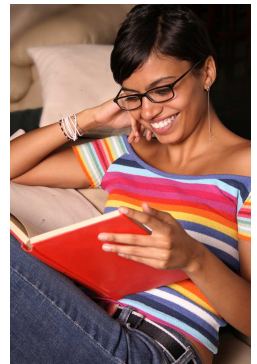
The team is also planning a public awareness campaign to reinforce some of the education efforts underway in the state such as the St. Mary's teen driver initiative which includes discussions on distracted driving. For more information, contact Dave Madaras at dave@chesapeakeesc.org.

Older Drivers

The team is reaching out to SHA to encourage infrastructure improvements that can benefit older drivers such as larger lettering on traffic signs. Montgomery County conducted an Older Driver Summit to look at the issues affecting this population and ways to improve safety. For more information, contact Dr. Carl Soderstrom at csoderstrom@mdot.state.md.us.

Young Drivers

The team is reviewing the effectiveness of the Baltimore teen driver campaign through a knowledge, attitude, and behavior before and after study. A pre-license program is also being con-



ducted for parents in Allegany and Calvert counties. A graduated driver's license enforcement effort is underway in Calvert County and road safety audit data specific to young drivers is being distributed to the Community Traffic Safety Coordinators throughout the state.

The team is working closely with the MVA's new Driver Safety Division to develop driver education programs with more checks and balances on driver education schools and instructors, and an initiative to get parents more involved in the driver education process. For more information, contact Debbie Jennings at jennndk@co.cal.md.us.

Truck & Bus Safety

The team reported fatalities involving trucks and buses were down in 2007 and injuries were below target. Maryland is now fourth in the nation for the number of truck inspections.

The team is looking at ways to involve more local law enforcement agencies in truck safety programs. Police officers who are not trained in truck inspection procedures can now do traffic enforcement without doing a truck inspection.

A virtual weigh station which can weigh trucks through sensors in the road should be in use very soon. If a truck is found to be overweight, officers can pull over the truck down the road. For more information, contact jrotz@sha.state.md.us.

Emphasis Area Team Update **Cont.**

Motorcycle Safety

A fall campaign was conducted before bike week in Ocean City, and materials distributed to businesses in the area. As part of bike week, the MVA did a fast track licensing program that allowed people without a license to obtain one at a local community college.

A Motorcycle Safety Summit was held in December 2008 involving a large group of stakeholders. The ultimate goal of the Summit was to reach consensus on a motorcycle safety campaign for 2009 and include rider outreach, enforcement, and rider education. There has not been a great deal done in the engineering area as yet. The team is waiting for the Motorcycle Safety report that is part of the NCHRP Report 500 series to find out what are effective engineering approaches. For more information, contact Andy Krajewski at akrajewski@mdot.state.md.us.



Stakeholder Updates

Vernon Betkey, Chief of the Maryland Highway Safety Office and the SHSP Project Manager, was elected as the Chairman of the Governors Highway Safety Association at their annual meeting in September 2008. The GHSA is the States' voice on highway safety issues and represents all state highway safety offices, the District of Columbia, and five US territories on behavioral issues as well as other aspects of highway safety such as traffic records and training.

Douglas Mowbray joins the SHSP Information and Decision Support Systems Emphasis Area Team as the new Traffic Records Coordinator for the Maryland Highway Safety Office. He may be contacted at DMowbray@sha.state.md.us or 410-787-4068.

Michelle Atwell joins the SHSP Young Driver Emphasis Area Team as the new Young Driver Coordinator for the Maryland Highway Safety Office. She may be contacted at matwell@sha.state.md.us or 410-787-5893.

Gregory Welker, an active member of the Southern Region Team has been promoted from District Engineer to Deputy Administrator/Chief Engineer of the State Highway Administration. Greg looks forward to expanding his role in the SHSP to the entire State. Greg may be contacted at gwelker@sha.state.md.us or 410-545-1001.

Suzy Solo is the new CTSP Coordinator for the Mid-Western Region that includes Carroll and Frederick Counties and will be active in region's SHSP efforts. Suzy may be reached at ssolo@dhhm.state.md.us or 410-876-4819.

Chief Bernadette DiPino of the Ocean City Police Department was elected in September as the new President of the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association. Chief DiPino has vowed her support of the Maryland Highway Safety Program and the Strategic Highway Safety Plans and has already participated in several major highway safety events. Chief DiPino may be contacted at bdipino@ococean.com or 410-723-6633.

Kevin Quinlan, Chief of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Safety Advocacy Division and a staunch supporter of highway safety in Maryland and across the country, died suddenly on December 16, 2008. Kevin was very involved in the Maryland Impaired Driving Coalition Legislative Committee and regularly advocated upgrades to Maryland laws.

Traffic Safety Business Programs

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Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson, another Foundation member, requires employees to pull off the road before using a hand-held cell phone or text messaging device, seat belt use, and notification of a supervisor within 24 hours of any serious traffic charge. Employees who get tickets can lose the use of company vehicles or be required to take driver improvement classes. For more information on the Maryland Highway Safety Foundation, visit <http://www.mdhwsafety.org>.

The **United Parcel Service (UPS)** facility in Easton, MD, has taken the lead in establishing a Seat Belts On, Cell Phones Off (SOCO) program for all their drivers, a first for a UPS facility.



The company took the action because vehicle crashes are the number one cause of death in the workplace and drivers using cell phones are four times more likely to crash. UPS also prohibits all drivers from talking on a cell phone or texting while driving.

For more information on the program, contact Dave Madaras at the Chesapeake Region Safety Council at dave@chesapeakeesc.org.

**For more information on
Maryland's Strategic
Highway Safety Plan**

Contact:

**Maryland Highway Safety Office
State Highway Administration
7491 Connelley Drive
Hanover, MD 21076
mhso@sha.state.md.us**